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Lawrence Man Saves Drowning Dog

Lawrence resident John Cassabria was doing deliveries for Amazon last months when he found an elderly dog drowning in a pool. Cassabria dove into the pool and saved the dog.

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POLICE

Valley Patriot of the Month

Witness at Nuremburg! PFC Joseph Alfred Ducharme US Army Air Corp

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

PELHAM, NH - An alumnus of Methuen's Tenney Memorial High, Class of 1945, where he played football and ran track, Joseph Ducharme is a lifelong Pelham, New Hampshire resident.

Back in the 1940s, Pelham, New Hampshire was too small for a high school, so the town sent the children to high school in Lowell, Dracut, and Methuen, paying tuition to those communities. Pelham, New Hampshire did not have its own high school until the 1970s. As a 17-year-old in 1944, while still in his junior year in highs, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corp as an Aviation (Pilot) Cadet. When called to active duty after graduation, while training at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, Joe was informed by the US Army Air Corp, that they had "too many pilots".

Required by the US Army Air Corp to pick another job to train for, the war had ended in May 1945 in Europe, and was getting very bloody in the Pacific Theater that summer, Joe chose to go to Buckley Field, in Aurora, Colorado to train as a Military Policeman. Sent to Europe after training, he arrived in France, and was put on a narrow-gauge railroad, called a "40 and 8". Used first in World War I, these rickety trains transported Private First-Class Joseph Ducharme and his comrades to Munich, Germany.

Later moving to Ansbach, Germany, he was assigned to a 12-man squadron, attached to the 9th Air Force, patrolling Germany on 1940's Harley Davidson motorcycles, specially built for the US Military. The war in Europe was won, but fighting continued with isolated German SS units, and the countryside was filled with armed men from partisan units, armed deserters from all sides, and some armed hard-core criminals, too. I recall an incident from an earlier Veteran's interview, on April 29, 1945, when soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division liberated the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, Germany, three young Jewish men went off to "say goodbye" to their German SS guard, they found him hiding in a shed, and beat him to death with a shovel. General George Patton refused to discipline any of the US Army soldiers who allowed the Jewish inmates to enact justice on their SS captors. PFC Joseph Ducharme was present and worked security at the famous Nuremberg Trials, where he met Rudolph Hess.

In 1948, he married Rita Bennett from Pelham, New Hampshire as well, she was an RN. They have four children, (all with advanced University degrees) five grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren. One of his fondest memories with his wife, was a train trip to Vancouver, British Columbia. His recall of the purchase of their first house in 1950, was uncanny, $3,000 for a house and ten acres. Financed at ¾'s of one percent. A seven-year mortgage with monthly

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Newburyport Police Spit on the Constitution

Methuen resident Dan Kane was accused of using a racial epithet to a woman and her daughter on the streets of Newburyport. The woman went to police after the alleged incident took place even though no threats or violence occurred.

That's right, someone actually went to the cops because someone used naughty words of a racial nature.

When we first got the press release from Newburyport that police were seriously "investigating" the incident we thought it was a joke. Surely the Newburyport Marshall (chief) has heard of the First Amendment. Surely he knows that police have no authority to investigate expressions of speech within his jurisdiction.

Surely, the police were not taking precious resources away from rape or drug cases to launch a criminal investigation against someone for exercising their First Amendment right of free speech.

We were wrong.

Even though the police didn't witness this alleged incident, the cops tracked down the dastardly villain who dared to say something racially insensitive in their progressive little town.

Within a few days we got another press release that they had arrested Dan Kane.

Yeah. They arrested Mr. Kane for uttering words. Not threatening words. Not yelling fire in a crowded theater. But, simply for being accused of saying something most people find repugnant.

To try and cover up their unconstitutional behavior, Newburyport cops charged Kane with disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace, since there is no charge for making "racist comments".

It was a blatant attempt to use other laws to punish Mr. Kane for expressing unapproved thoughts in this current climate of racism-hysteria.

We have to keep checking the headlines every day, but as of the time we went to print, American citizens still have a right of free speech and free expression in this country. Let's make something clear, no matter how repulsed we may feel about someone's racist views, people have the right to express them without fear of being locked up by the cops. So-called "hate speech" is not an exception to the First Amendment right of free speech, no matter what they say in the public schools.

When the Newburyport police sent out their first press release they didn't say they were investigating a "disturbance of the peace" they said they were investigating "racist comments". That was the reason they targeted Kane for criminal charges.

Normally, we use the space in this editorial to defend our heroes of Law Enforcement who are under attack every day.

But, when police overstep their authority like this we will always condemn it.

Always. ◊

JOEL'S FOOD CORNER

Great Pizza in The Merrimack Valley

Joel Faretra
VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST

After a small hiatus, the column is back! My thoughts are with the staff at Borelli's Deli who has tested positive for COVID. Hoping they get well soon and Borelli's can reopen quickly.

As you head out to local restaurants in Massachusetts, please do not take it out on the staff and owners for the restrictions put in place. They are trying to adhere to all the guidelines put forth by the Governor of Massachusetts and at the same time compete with other establishments right over the border.

If you are going out to eat, please be patient. If you make a reservation and cannot make it, call the restaurant so they can fill that table. With 50 percent capacity, every seat counts.

For this month's column, the family decided to try some beach and bakery pizza. We ordered from Beach Pizza in Salem, NH, Tripoli's in Methuen and Piro's Pizza Plus in Methuen.

Beach Pizza (www.nhbeachpizza.com, 5 Kelly Rd, Salem, NH 603-458-2184)

Underwhelming was the theme from the family as we ate. This was our first time ordering from Beach Pizza. There was no cheese on the pizza so you had to order extra cheese.

We expected sweeter sauce but it was pretty bland but I did enjoy the addition of the oregano on the slices. **2 Beards**

Tripoli's pizza (www.tripolisbakery.com, multiple locations in the valley) We got the sweet sauce we were looking for! There was cheese on the slices so extra cheese wasn't a need but the slice of provolone makes it better. My family is definitely split on whether to get the extra cheese on the slices. If we had done a blind taste test, you would have been able to tell which is Tripoli's, they are consistent. That is an underrated quality, you know what you are getting every time. We did all agree that the pizza is better while sitting at the beach on a glorious, summer day. **3.5 Beards**

Piro's Pizza Plus (www.pirospizzaplus.com, 300 Merrimack St, Methuen, MA 978-683-7585) Piro's was the unanimous favorite in the household.

You got 10 slices to a box instead of 8 for the same price. It reminded me of the bakery pizza that I grew up around in Everett. It had the best crust out of the three we ordered, and all the slices were more crispy.

Like Tripoli's, you do not need to add provolone but if you are a fan, it's worth the addition for only $0.25 a slice. **4 Beards**

As a bonus review, **Bada Bing** (www.badabingmenu.com, 32 Hampshire St Methuen, Ma 978 683-0009) has added a new pizza to their menu, "The Northender". It is a traditional pizza with Italian sausage, peppers, onions, and parmesan cheese. This has become my go-to pizza when ordering out. If you are a fan of getting a sausage sub from a pushcart when in Boston, you have to try this! My recommendation is to ask for it well done. The toppings are plentiful so it could become floppy if it isn't crispy. **4.5 Beards**

Since I am going under the knife on the 10th and will be home for at least a month recovering, there will be plenty of time for more take-outs and reviews.

Joel Faretra is a Methuen City Councilor, and The Valley Patriot Food Columnist. Please pass on recommendations of places to try to me at jfaretra67@gmail.com. ◊

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Methuen Mayor's Report

Exclusively for The Valley Patriot

Neil Perry
METHUEN MAYOR

It may not seem like it to you, but the summer has flown by, and here we are in September already. Much has happened in the month of August and we'll discuss some of the more important ones here – but remember I'm always willing to answer your questions or take your feedback either through email or via the Mayor's Minutes show on MCTV or the monthly Paying Attention! Podcast with Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan.

Let's start with revisiting a topic that has been much discussed and debated - the **MPS School Re-Opening Plan**.

The Good: I know I speak for the school committee members and myself when I say we tried our very best to focus on the facts and make the best and safest decision possible. Though I don't have any children school age in Methuen anymore, I still have one in College at UMass Lowell getting his PhD. I know my fellow committee members and I approached the decision carefully and respectfully, simply trying to do what we believed to be best for all concerned. Some do not agree, and that is their right.

Regardless, after hearing a presentation on the air quality in our schools and working to ensure communication of metrics to guard against the impact of the virus, we voted a second time to revert the dates to the original hybrid start dates.

All students start remotely on September 14th; our most vulnerable learners begin in school on the 21st; our hybrid plan begins (split into cohorts) for grades K - 4 and Grade 9 on October 5th, with the balance of our students beginning the hybrid on October 25th.

Cohorts in each grade will be split A/B with A spending Monday and Tuesday in-person instruction, and Thursday and Fridays remotely. Cohort B works in reverse.

All will be off Wednesdays to allow deep cleaning in all buildings.

For as many students as practicable in lower grades, MPS will be opening remote learning centers for younger students who have working parents to attend in a separate section of each school. Superintendent Kwong, her staff and the teachers all deserve a great deal of praise for a well thought out plan. Regardless, know that each parent has the final say in whether their child attends school remotely or goes hybrid. That is not up to the School Committee nor MPS.

We will continue to monitor closely to ensure the safety of all staff and students (both the Air Quality and the COVID metrics) and will regularly communicate what is going on to ensure your awareness.

The Not So Good: No plan is perfect. I think we did the best possible, but we just are not sure of the impact COVID may have. I understand some would like a full return, and others completely remote. I feel, and I know I am not alone on this, that we have done our best and now need to monitor to ensure it works as well as possible. I'd suggest tolerance as all become familiar with the process, and if something happens, know that we are committed to fixing it - reach out to your school principal, your teachers or even me before you post your complaints to social media. We are all trying to make this work for the best of our children.

Congressman Joe Kennedy with Methuen Mayor Neil Perry during Kennedys last minute swing through the Merrimack Valley before last week's election.

Next, we discuss **Moody's Financial Evaluation of the City of Methuen**.

The Good: Last week Moody's raised the evaluative outlook for the City of Methuen from Negative to Stable. This is well earned after two years of focused financially conservative efforts and in FY'20, our numbers when finalized will show we added $3.1M to Free Cash bottom line. Much credit goes to the CAFO, the department heads, my administration (as well as Mayor Jajuga) and the City Council as well. We have been making prudent financial decisions, survived an awful year without the deficit many cities and towns are facing, and now await any potential impact from events in the latter half of 2020 – but when certified our Free Cash will be close to $6M.

The Not So Good: Stable, while better than Negative for an outlook, is not positive and that is where we aim to be. Moody's cautions that reversion to previous financial tendencies or a negative impact from the Superior's arbitration (November 2020) could impact the outlook adversely, while continued fiscal conservatism may positively affect the outlook. We (my administration and City Council) are committed to maintaining this positive first step and will continue to be transparent every step of the way.

Next, I'm pleased to announce that the week of Labor Day will mark the first meeting of our **Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Board for the City of Methuen**.

We have formed a 17-person volunteer group (all have been contacted and agreed that this is an area they wish to contribute) that will begin meeting to address many of the issues we began discussing in our diversity forum earlier this summer. Though I would like to have started earlier, the Fy'21 budget and some recent health issues delayed my approach here. I am excited for this group to provide opportunities not just to simply identify problems but focus on real change through opportunities that can move us forward as a community. There will be regular updates from the advisory board communicated in several ways, so please, be sure to reach out to them. I'm committed to improving our community and that begins by focusing on the opportunities for positive change.

Lastly some updates on local events completed during the *dog days* of August:

The Outdoor Track: Most work has been completed, but we are now grading the center of the track and reinstalling LED lights around the perimeter. Most

PERRY: PAGE 5

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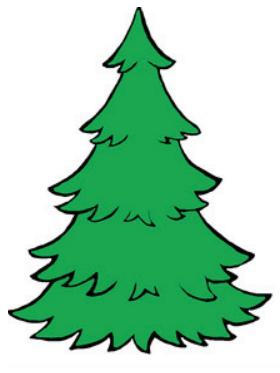


Every year, New England Die Cutting and the Abare Family donate a tree to the City of Methuen for the Christmas season. We are looking for a minimum 40' Christmas Tree right before Thanksgiving.

We will pay you for your tree, have it cut down, have the tree stump ground in your yard, and landscape the area.

If interested, please contact: David Abare 978.580.9099 or Dave@nedc.com

IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

Creating Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

While we have made important strides in Massachusetts in recent years to provide inclusive opportunities for persons with disabilities, there is always more work that can and should be done.

In that spirit, and coinciding with the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law 30 years ago by President George H.W. Bush, the Senate recently passed legislation I co-sponsored that removes existing barriers for students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders or other developmental disabilities so they can attend public institutions of higher education.

Under An Act Creating Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, these students would not be required to pass the MCAS or take college entrance exams in order to access opportunities for inclusive academic, social, and career development opportunities on campuses with their peers.

In response to the challenges facing school districts and public higher education institutions during the COVID-19 emergency, the legislation ensures no additional costs are placed on a school district beyond the existing obligations already required under state and federal special education law.

Furthermore, the bill ensures that colleges are not required to bear any additional costs of providing individual supports and services for students with intellectual disabilities who attend the college through the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI), which enables school districts and public institutions of higher education to partner together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment initiative options for students with intellectual disabilities ages 18 to 22. Since 2007, over 1,200 students with disabilities have taken advantage of this opportunity to participate academically and socially in the life of participating colleges in Massachusetts through the MAICEI.

For too long, public school options for students with intellectual disabilities transitioning to adulthood have been limited. Ensuring these individuals have access to higher education will lead to greater opportunities for meaningful integrated employment and a fulfilling life in their community.

I am grateful to Senator Joan B. Lovely (D-Salem) for her sponsorship of the bill and leadership on this critical issue and urge the House of Representatives and Governor to advance the legislation across the finish line as soon as possible.

If you have questions about this legislation or any other issue – or need assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic - please contact me and my team anytime via email at diana.dizoglio@masenate.gov or phone 978-984-7747.

Yours in service,

Diana ◊

Business Sectors In Medias Res Corona Virus

Tomas G. Michel
BUSINESS COLUMNIST

The production, distribution, trade and consumption of goods and services changed its *modus operandi*, as a result of the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus. A public health crisis and a major economic shift event.

Federal, state and local government officials were forced by the infection statistics of their constituents, to halt abruptly commercial interactions from firms, and regulate the behavior of their communities, to prevent an overshoot of medical resources and disproportionate deaths. Consequently, whole industries operations crashed, provoking a substantial number of establishments to go out of business.

According to market reports from IBISWorld, In the United States alone, the taxi-transportation service has had a decline of 10.6% in revenue during the year 2020. Similarly, domestics flights have dropped 9.0% and construction 14.6% due to travel bans or regulations limiting gatherings and logistic processes. As a collateral, leaving many unemployed and at risk of having their livelihood disappear.

On the other hand, there were industries that surged such as the hand sanitizer manufacturing which raised from —1.9% to 16.6%— in revenue for the year 2020. Comparably, the guns and ammunition sector increased 6.8%.

We were forced to be long-distance-productive (away from each other) yet remaining connected. Adjectives like "cloud-based" have reformed their connotation from hip to necessary, signifying entities' operations being functional in context. An internet connection has never been so important, particularly for the public education system; as for in the fall of 2020 transforming itself into a societal need. Essentially, firms: schools, small-businesses, organizations, municipalities, corporations have been pushed to exist and operate on the digital realm with the expectation to be effective at it.

Social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are now fundamental to outreach audiences and promote sales. Religious organizations are not exempt to the pattern, industry that has suffered a 5.1% drop in revenue due to the prohibition of worship services. We are going through a revolution that is disrupting markets and changing consumer behaviors to shop online, hence e-commerce is imperative for many entrepreneurs and business owners.

As we go through this collective transformation that is technical and technology centered, changing the way enterprises compete and communicate, means entrepreneurs need to adjust as well to the new conditions. There's an imperative need to adjust or change the organizational structures of businesses and organizations to ensure their sustainability.

Considering that COVID-19 vaccines from various health/research institutions are merely being developed or in trial such as the one from Moderna's which is based in Cambridge. Moreover, that any small gathering is capable to spike an outbreak implies that businesses ought to attempt to redefine their mission, visions, and values, because the world pre-pandemic as we knew it has changed.

Now we have a demand for software solutions like never before. The retail trade sector has had a decrease on revenue of 9.4% and at the same time Jeff Bezos, Amazon's CEO, became the world's richest person as per Forbes Magazine. Hence, just as there are challenges, there are opportunities that can be taken advantage of in our new economic landscape. And those opportunities will lie on the eyes of the beholder on whether they are able to identify the needs that demand to be satisfied by creating a product or service that meets it. ◊

F.H. Cann & Assoc. Awards Two $1,000 Scholarships to Two Grads of Lawrence High

Scholarships Were Awarded Through the Exchange Club of Lawrence and the Andovers

The founders of F.H. Cann & Associates (FHC), a company that delivers world-class accounts receivable management and contact center solutions, are pleased to announce that they have awarded two $1,000 scholarships to recent graduates of Lawrence High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

To learn more about F.H. Cann & Associates and the services that they offer, please visit https://www.fhcann.com.

Sheri Traficante-Cann, President/CEO of FHC, noted the scholarships were awarded through the Exchange Club of Lawrence and the Andovers. Frank Cann, Executive Vice President of F.H. Cann & Associates, is a board member of the organization.

Remy Garcia is one of the recipients of the F.H. Cann & Associates Scholarship. She is a recent graduate of Lawrence High School and plans on attending Salem State University in the fall.

"She was awarded the Yale Book, which is given to a high school student who has an outstanding personal character and intellectual promise," Sheri Traficante-Cann noted, adding that Remy also received the L-PIN award and was a member of Top Notch Scholars, through which she has volunteered at the Cor Unum Meal Center.

"Remy was also a member of the Outdoors Club and the Yearbook Club."

The second recipient of the F.H. Cann & Associates Scholarship is Gladdys Jiminian, who also graduated from Lawrence High School. Gladdys will attend NECC.

As Ms. Traficante-Cann noted, Gladdys was a member of the Lawrence Youth Council, activities volunteer at the Edgewood Retirement Home, and Next Generation Leadership Network.

"Gladdys also participated in the Dual Enrollment at Northern Essex Community College, and she was also a member of the Dance Team at Lawrence High."

The fact that F.H. Cann & Associates awarded two scholarships to local high school graduates will not surprise the many clients who have worked with the company since it first opened in 1999.

The company's team has earned a well-deserved reputation for giving back to the community; in addition to the recent work with the Exchange Club of Lawrence and the Andovers, F.H. Cann & Associates has been involved with a number of other organizations, including the Pulmonary Hypertension Association and Lazarus House Ministries.

About F.H. Cann & Associates:

F.H. Cann & Associates, Inc. (FHC) was established in 1999 and has provided best-in-class accounts receivable management services and contact center solutions for over 20 years. More information can be found on their official website: https://www.fhcann.com ◊

PERRY: FROM PAGE 3

of this work will be done by the Methuen DPW – so please, stay off the track as it remains closed – a little while longer. I'm sure you will love it when it's finished, as it already looks great. But it remains closed for a little while. The City installed its first electric charging station for automobiles at the **Nevins Library** and the month saw the Library open to patrons again as well.

The Charging Station had been requested by library patrons and was installed thanks to a partnership with National Grid and Voltrek. Curbside pickup of books from the library remains in process, but you can also go into the library on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There are a number of programs planned for the Fall, so stop on by or check out the Nevins Library website for more info.

On the **Census 2020** front, Methuen is now at approximately 70% completed, but time is growing short. I would remind each family that this Census goes a long way in determining federal funding for the next **ten years**, so please, if you have not answered the Census, do so now. Our schools, our library and many other programs can only benefit if we complete the Census as accurately as possible.

Fall Events – Recently I have been asked about some of the Fall Events we normally have (Halloween at GreyCourt and Trick or Treat) and one person even asked me about the Tree Lighting. I will tell you what I told him. It is too early for me to tell what will be happening as far as COVID etc.

What I can say is that I do want to do something, as I know as a community how much we long for normalcy and those events. So, we are thinking about those events and what options we might have. If you have a feeling one way or another or an idea on how we might safely have an alternative, I am all ears. But I am not canceling nor postponing just yet. I am committed to giving our community something.

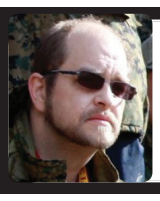
Finally, we are now in the midst of voting; with **state primaries on September 1, and a Presidential Election to follow on November 3rd.** In Methuen, you can vote by mail (deadline to file for that was August 26th) or vote in person. Polling places remain the same with the exception that those who voted at the Park Gardens on Burnham Road will now vote at the Methuen Senior Center on Lowell Street.

Signage will indicate the change and announcements via reverse 911, social media etc. have been made. All others would vote at their regular polling places in Methuen. So, make sure you voice your choice. But regardless of whether you consider yourself red or blue (Republican or Democrat), take a deep breath and realize we have come through a very difficult year, **together**.

Vote your conscience and support it proudly, but when discussing with friends, neighbors, or others in person or on social media, recognize that sometimes it is ok to simply agree to disagree. In fact, I would argue it's one of the things that makes us truly unique as human beings.

In the meantime, I ask God to watch over and protect all of you and want you to know how honored I remain to be your mayor. I look forward to continued progress in the coming months!

Neil Perry is in the first year of his first term as Mayor of Methuen. You can email him at NpIrish1213@Gmail.com ◊



PAYING ATTENTION! with Tom Duggan

From Criminal Conspiracy to Smoking Cigars

Attacks Against Chief Solomon Must Stop

Since we started the Valley Patriot 16 years ago, I've been hearing the same stories, accusations, lame excuses, and dire predictions about Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon.

For years, I have been told by politicians that Solomon is "corrupt" and he "mismanages his department."

And whenever I ask for proof, I get the same tired excuses, "any day now" or my favorite "I don't trust you".

So, my policy with Joe Solomon (or any cop) has always been, show me the proof or shut up. Don't say you have some secret information that nobody else knows about, and that SOON everything will come to light. We've all seen that movie and we know how it ends. After all, Joe Solomon is still here.

Even after being investigated by the FBI, the state, the Department of Labor, the District Attorney, the Attorney General, and a myriad of other investigatory agencies Joe Solomon is still the chief.

Mind you, he also won a lawsuit against the city where his critics had every opportunity to prove - out in the open - how "corrupt" he is and how badly he "mismanaged" the department.

They failed.

And, until recently, the political campaign of misinformation had mostly died down, only to be resurrected once again by current members of the city council with personal agendas.

Without ever presenting any proof, councilors accused Solomon of being involved in a "criminal conspiracy", hiring unqualified "friends" who "worked for his private security company", and "failing to adequately train his men."

Councilors routinely spout these accusations against Solomon, even after the accusation is proven wrong.

As just one example, the chief doesn't hire or fire police officers, the mayor does that. Yet, councilors continue to say he "hires his friends and refuses to fire or discipline them when they do wrong". They've also made claims that Solomon mismanaged his department when he moved Lt. Randy Hagar out as head of one crime bureau and replaced him with Captain Gallant, who has half the experience running that bureau.

When Solomon explained that Hagar was demoted from captain to lieutenant as the *result of the city council* cutting his budget, and further explained that only a captain can run a bureau, the council pretended he never said it, and continued callig it favoritism anyway.

This misinformation spouted by councilors was so egregious that Lt. Hagar himself walked into the meeting and asked to be heard. Lt. Hagar said he believed it was unfair of the council to demote him from captain to lieutenant, and still expect him to do the work of a captain – running a bureau - for Lieutenant's pay.

Councilor Zeigler has long warned her fellow councilors that they open themselves up to a lawsuit when councilors publicly name city employees.

Not to mention the fact that the city council has no say over the day to day operations of any city department, much less any authority to tell the chief who to assign to a particular bureau.

THE AUDIT

With all the rumors and lies being spread, back in January Mayor Perry agreed to hire an outside firm for a management audit of the police department to objectively investigate the truth about the chief's management.

Councilors agreed to the audit and voted to spend more than $80K for an independent contractor to do the audit.

Every single councilor said at the time that they would respect the result of the management audit, whatever it showed.

NOT SO FAST

While the audit is currently taking place, councilors decided they didn't want to wait for the results of the $80K audit they just purchased a few weeks earlier. So, they called for a symbolic vote of "no confidence" in the chief.

Without presenting any evidence, councilors made the same, tired old accusations I've been hearing since 2004.

"Solomon smokes cigars in a city owned vehicle!"

GASP! Say it isn't SO!

"Solomon gets paid too much!"

Yeah, his contract was approved by the city council and signed by the mayor.

"Solomon hires his friends and demotes his enemies"

SOLOMON: PAGE 8

BAKE SHOOTING WAS NOT RACIAL -
Black woman called for help, police responded

PLAY HOCKEY AND SHUT THE HELL UP

JOE KENNEDY STUMPS IN METHUEN

TURTLEBOY BUSTS HAVERHILL TEACHERS FAKING FEAR OF COVID

THREE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS VOTE AGAINST

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

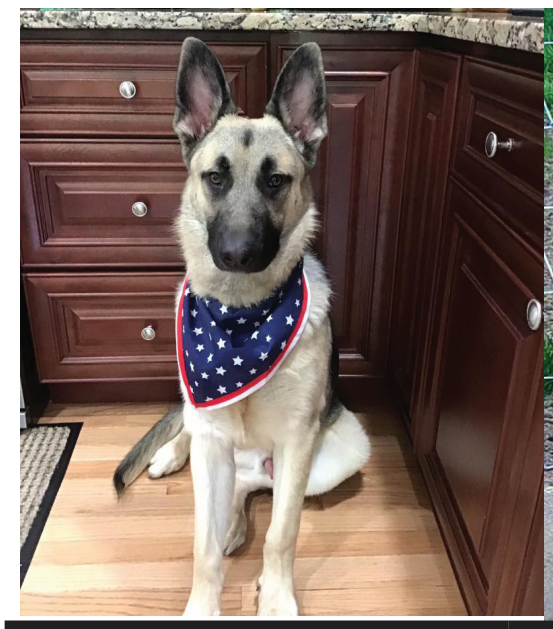
Methuen Sch

Sue What is highly frustrating for me as an objective seeker of facts is that YES the opinion of most people is that he makes to much money, fair enough..... but that's very different than being corrupt, incompetent, or mismanaging his department - which is what councilors have publicly alleged without presenting one shred of evidence to back it up.

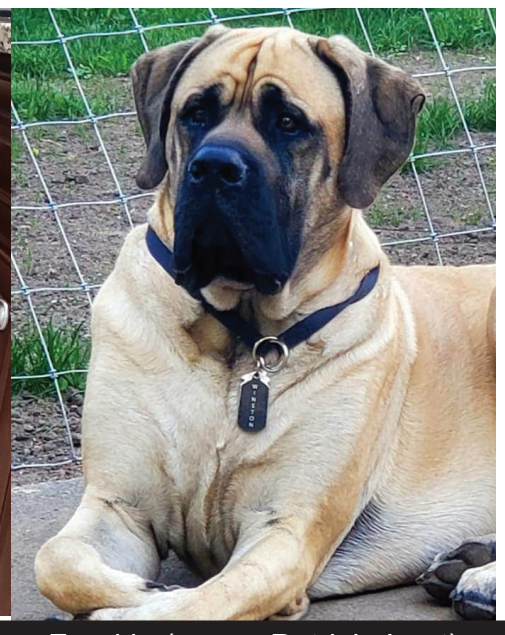
Christmas tree ladu

Who will Replace Freddie?

Last month our Valley Patriot's Freddie of "Ask Freddie" passed away. We put out a call on Facebook for a replacement and decided that our readers should decide. Of the 67 entries we had, our Valley Patriot editorial staff nominated the ten dogs you see on this page. Voting will take place on The Valley Patriot's Facebook Page starting Tuesday, August 4th. The top five vote getters will go on to the next round of voting until we have found our replacement for Freddie. Runners-up will all get to appear in the Valley Patriot periodically to comment on doggie news. "Freddie Says" is sponsored by the Daily Dose Cafe in Lawrence.

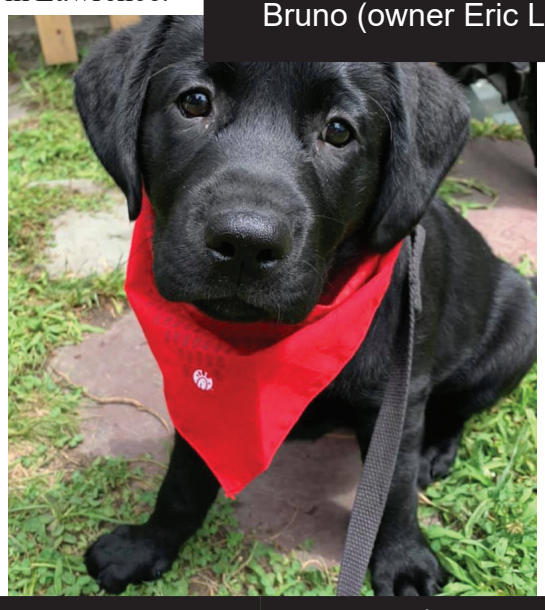


Bruno (owner Eric Langlais)

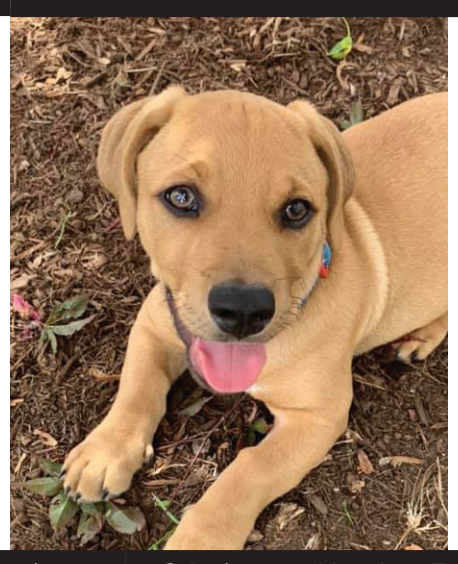


Frankie (owner Patricia Lent)

Zeus (owner Sally Sweets)



Winston (owner Courtney Hutchinson)



Lexi (owner Keith Wlodyka)

Otis (owner Heather Faretra)

Maggie (owner Duncan Burns)

Pal (owner Debbie Brady)

Kane (owner Denise Peaslee)

Bailey (owner Michelle McCormack)

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House Passes Legislation on Health Care, Economy, & the Environment

Linda Dean Campbell
MA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

This summer, the **Massachusetts House of Representatives** has passed several major bills that tackle some of the most important issues in our Commonwealth, including economic development, policing reform, health care, climate change, and foster care reform. These bills are currently being negotiated with the Senate and will then be sent to Governor Baker.

The **economic development bill** will invest $370 million into our economy to create jobs and boost our recovery, with funding for small businesses, manufacturing, cultural institutions, community infrastructure projects, and housing creation. The bill will also give cities and towns the ability to more easily expand their housing stock. I was proud to secure funding for community development projects in Methuen, including:

$450,000 for a signage and beautification program for economic development districts in Methuen

$250,000 for a mixed-use and historic preservation project at the Searles Estate in Methuen

$150,000 for a study to identify new housing and economic development opportunities in downtown Methuen

The **health care bill** will establish patient financial protections related to surprise out-of-network billing and make telehealth services more accessible and affordable, especially for mental health care. The bill will also expand access to urgent care for MassHealth patients and increase financial support for our community hospitals through supplemental Medicaid payments. Most of our community hospitals are in gateway cities and serve populations heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, making this state support all the more critical.

The **climate change bill** will create a detailed roadmap to ensure the state can achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The bill will also improve access to solar energy incentive programs for low-income residents and move forward with the modernization of our electric grid, which will be necessary to further grow our clean energy economy.

The **foster care reform bill** will combat child abuse and neglect, improve remote learning for at-risk youth, support foster parents, and improve the operation of the foster care system and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This legislation will strengthen protections for vulnerable youth while providing youth and families with needed support both during the pandemic and in the long term.

The House also passed a bill I filed to notify the public in a timely manner when sewage overflows into our state's rivers, including the Merrimack – a necessary step to make sure residents can take precautions to avoid contact with contaminated waters. Public notification will protect public health in the short term and enable our Commonwealth and local cities and towns to apply for federal grant money to upgrade wastewater infrastructure in the long term. I thank my colleagues for their support of this priority legislation for the Merrimack Valley.

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature and serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. She can be reached at Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2380. ◊

SOLOMON: FROM 5

Once again - the chief doesn't have the authority to hire or discipline police officers, only the mayor can do that.

But, the most humorous deception was when Councilor Beauregard cited all the bad press Solomon brought to the city. Mind you, the last three Globe and Eagle Tribune stories were generated by councilors looking to grandstand about how they are the guardians of the taxpayers' money.

So, in essence, they run to the press, bad mouth the chief - which makes the city look bad - and then blame the chief for the "bad press". If that's not a bag job, I don't know what is.

WHEN FACTS GET IN THE WAY

To top it all off, this little exchange between Councilor Simard and Chief Solomon really said it all.

Simard accused the chief of not properly training his men as an example of his mismanagement of the department.

Solomon told the council (and meeting minutes back this up) that, for the last four years he has requested the money for officer training and his requests were denied.

Simard's answer was "You never take the blame for anything, do you?"

And there you have it.

In the face of actual facts, continue the deception because some people will always believe it. Continue to attack because the man you attack is unpopular and makes too much money. Any amount of dishonesty is acceptable, so long as you can get your name in the paper.

Councilor DiZoglio was the only voice of reason. "We, as a council, voted to do an audit. This will bias the audit. The audit is either going to say his department has been neglected and mismanaged or not. We don't know that yet. The additional drama this council has created over the years is exactly what the voters rejected in the last election. We as a council have to change that. We are in this problem because the (previous) mayor and council kept voting on things behind the scenes. Now we are doing the same thing."

DiZoglio said his fellow councilors presented no evidence of wrongdoing and he has seen no evidence of mismanagement.

He added that the Globe had the wording of the no confidence vote last week, while he only received it the night before the meeting. "And that's because you knew I was not for this," he charged.

Councilor DiZoglio stood alone and voted "present" on the vote of no confidence. That took courage given the current public anger against the chief over his pay.

My prediction is that if the audit shows Solomon has not "mismanaged" his department, some city councilors will question the integrity of audit and claim it is somehow tainted because this council is not interested in the truth, they are interested in promoting a political narrative.

Facts be damned.

It's time for this foolishness to end.

Councilors Simard, Beauregard, Saba, and McCarty need to show the public proof of corruption and mismanagement by Joe Solomon or shut up until they can.

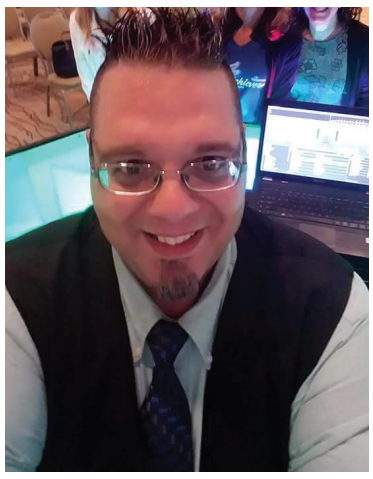
Your Health with Rick Bellanti

Eating On The Road Driving To Better Health

Rick Bellanti
HEALTH & WELLNESS COLUMNIST

With my work as a musician, I find myself driving a lot, to consultations with clients, meeting with venues and traveling to perform events (sometimes up to 2 or 3 hours one way). I also find myself traveling for vacations to places like Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington DC to name a few.

Unless you are prepared ahead of time, you may be faced with lots of challenges along the way, when it comes to eating meals (especially healthy meals). In this fast paced society, everyone wants quick, easy meals that won't break our wallets. Although it may be more challenging to eat healthy when on the road, it's far from impossible.



Typically, if you are on the road for any length of time, whether for work or vacation, you cannot forget about eating healthy. You need to remind yourself being healthy doesn't take a vacation. Having a plan before you leave the house is a good start. First, you need to figure out the length of your trip; is it just a couple hours? Or are you road tripping for nine to ten hours driving? Preparation is definitely the key to your success. I'm going to give you some of my preparation ideas that I bring along with me on road trips to keep us on the right track to staying healthy.

First and foremost, you hear me say it all the time, over and over: **WATER!**

I never, ever leave the house without my 32oz. reusable cup filled with ice and water. Always sipping it when I drive to keep me hydrated and full, and I try to refill it as often as I can. (The only drawback is frequent bathroom breaks.)

I pack plastic resealable bags with some nuts or very dark chocolate to snack on, I bring rice cakes for that salty crunch factor, rather than picking up jumbo bags of unhealthy (sodium filled) chips, and other unhealthy sugary foods at the gas stations and convenience stores. If I bring a cooler with me, then I also pack some containers with sliced veggies like carrots or celery and fruits like grapes and assorted berries. It may not be as pretty as those donuts and muffins but if you stay full from what you packed, then you won't be tempted as much.

If you have to stop at these roadside convenience stores and gas stations to use the facilities or need a "Road Snack", you may notice that a lot of these places are starting to carry some healthy options for us and that are trying to ignore the Hostess cupcake aisle. For example, most now have a small refrigerated section, where you can find apples, oranges, bananas, and some places have cups of already cut up fruit, with grapes and berries. If you are really lucky, they have premade salads, individual cups of hummus and healthy prepackaged sliced turkey.

There are actually quite a few healthy options you can find on the road if you look hard enough. Even in the smallest of gas station stops you can find, cheese sticks, beef jerky (watch the sodium) or yogurt for protein, unsalted nuts, you might even find some of the healthier meal replacement bars (watch the sugar and sugar alcohols). The goal is to stay full while still remaining healthy by consuming less sugar and carbohydrates, because consuming those, as we already know, makes you crave them more.

If you find yourself short on time and need a full meal (not just a snack) and find yourself surrounded by all the fast food places (that always seem to pop up next to each other), remember there are plenty of choices you can make and still stay on the healthier side of things. People are always trying to make fast food the enemy of dieters, but you just need a little education on how or what to order. Yes, fast food is so much higher in carbohydrates and sodium than it should be and not very high in fiber. But, there are some healthier fast-food options out there.

Most, if not all, fast food places (including Dunkin Donuts) are pushing plant-based meat burgers as a healthy alternative to their meat counterparts. However, unless you are a vegetarian not eating meat, then they are really not much healthier for you. The sodium and fat content are pretty much the same, the issue was never the type of meat with dieters, the issue is the **BREAD**. Bread is one of the worst items on any fast food menu (and most of their meals are based around bread.)

Did you know that white bread (rolls) served at these establishments can affect your mood?

Since white bread is low in the fiber and protein which is needed to slow digestion, it instead is digested and absorbed rapidly which leads to your blood sugar rising very quickly and in no time, crashing, which leads to irritability and like mentioned before, make you crave more of it.

Stay away from bread at these places, grab a salad (use only half the dressing amount if you need to). Grab a chicken sandwich and eat just the chicken along with your salad (skip the bread and the mayo). Even get a burger, just skip the bread and fries (saturated fat and sodium). Stay away from condiments like ketchup and dipping sauces that are loaded with high fructose corn syrup. Skip the sugary drinks, grab a water, soda water (for that fizz), low fat milk or an unsweetened iced tea.

So, remember if you are heading out for any amount of time for a road trip, your healthy living doesn't have to take a vacation. Don't be tempted by all the gas stations and fast food stops along the highway. Keep a positive attitude, don't be so strict that you are not having a good time with your family. Splurge a little but don't go overboard and ruin everything you worked so hard for and gain "vacation weight" that lasts longer than you want. Good luck and happy driving.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 140lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here. ◊

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Providing a Clear Path to Veterans in Need During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

At the start of 2020, no one could have foreseen the impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic and how it would affect our Veterans. Since March of this year, Clear Path for Veterans New England (CP4VNE) has adapted to the situation and carried on in our mission to serve our Service Members, Veterans, and their families.

CP4VNE has been the clear choice for Veterans of all eras looking for supportive service assistance or wellness programming during this time. Our Team at CP4VNE provides a clear sense of security and wellbeing during this time through the immediate mobilization of community partnerships and teamwork. Our partner Massachusetts Military Support Foundation was our main ally in the Food4Vets food box distribution, with our team providing the means to distribute thousands of boxes and data management for this joint mission.

Since March 2020 CP4VNE has distributed nearly 11,000 food boxes to 2,269 Veterans and family members across New England including Merrimack Valley, Essex, Worcester, Middlesex, Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties. We have provided housing opportunities with Chelmsford Housing Authority (Shirley Meadows Project), employment services, canine service dog training, and recreational activities while maintaining COVID 19 guidance and compliance.

CP4VNE plans a variety of "Warrior Reset" monthly activities providing opportunities to relieve stress, learn new skills, and develop new friendships.

Last month, we hosted 10 Veterans on two fishing trips on the boat "Fair Warning" leaving from New Castle, New Hampshire. On both trips we had great weather. The day at sea alone provided an opportunity to alleviate stress during these uncertain times. On our first trip to sea, the team had the experience of a lifetime - reeling in a Tuna! The excitement of working together as a team to reel in the special catch provided an unforgettable experience. Our second trip was not as fruitful - the fish just were not biting but

the time at sea provided a much-needed respite from the day-to-day.

Every month CP4VNE partners with Old Glory Millworks to host a flag building workshop with Lance Perkins in Templeton. The highly rated all day workshop provides four Veterans the chance to escape their routines and create a work of art that they can proudly display.

One of the key benefits of woodworking is the enhancement of self-esteem. Participants are in charge; they decide the outcome. The day requires intense focus and precision work. When it all comes together there is great pride and joint praise for a job well done.

The day ends with a group photo that captures four new friends with smiles all around. Brandon Bregel, CP4VNE's Peer-to-Peer lead participates in each workshop. Despite the challenges this year, Lance and Brandon have hosted 20 Veterans, and each have created their own unique Old Glory.

If you are interested in learning how you can sponsor a workshop, please contact bbregel@clearpathne.org. If you are interested in learning more about our organization contact us at info@clearpathne.org. As a non-profit, we are always seeking donations both monetary and in-kind to help assist us in sustaining and creating future opportunities for program development. To make a donation visit us at https://clearpathnewengland.formstack.com/forms/donate_now or click here! ◊

(Photo left) Winners of the Patricia Perry Memorial Sholarship Kerri Horan (2nd from left) and Zoe Toohey (second from right) of Methue High School. Middle Photo: North Andover High graduate Ana Bono, winner of the Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship withher parents. PHOTO Right: Lauren Fitzgerald with her parents and Lisa Williams of AFC Urgent Care who donated $1,000 to this scholarship.

Valley Patriot Readers Donate $15k to Local Students

Each year The Valley Patriot newspaper holds a charity BASH Scholarship and Award Night in the third week of March. This year's BASH was cancelled less than a week before the event but the BASH committee decided to hold an event at the podcast studio (Studio21 Podcast Cafe) for all the students who were to receive scholarships at the BASH. You can watch the whole video on The Valley Patriot webpage.

DAN COADY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship was established three years ago by Valley Patriot reader Al Veilleux of Haverhill to honor Dan Coady from Coady's Towing who died in a tragic car accident on Rt. 495 while he was assisting a disabled motorist. Mr. Veilleux targeted the scholarship to a graduate of the Thomson Grammar School where Dan Coady's kids attended when he was killed.

"Dan's kids went to the Thomson School with my son and when he died I thought- we have to do something for him," Veilleux said on the Paying Attention Podcast. "As a father I could never imagine a kid losing their father so young in life. My hope is that in a few years when Dan's kid grauate high school they will get this scholarship!"

This year's Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship went to Ana Bono of North Andover High School who also attended the Thomson Grammar School.

Ana will be attending the University of New England in the fall where she will be majoring in Physical Therapy and will go on to get her doctorate.

This year The Valley Patriot raised $2,580.

Donors to this scholarship are Maureen Connell Schaufenbil, Ken Deluca, Al Veilleux, Ed Sullivan, Greg Morris, Gayle Linton, Frank Quintana, and Rick Bellanti.

MICHELLE DELUCA BENEDETTI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This is the first year The Valley Patriot is offering this scholarship. Michelle

DeLuca Benedetti passed away of cancer last year. Her brother Ken DeLuca established this award with an $1,100 donation to go to a student majoring in social work or criminal justice. The recipient of this scholarship was chosen by Haverhill School Committeeman Scott Wood, who could not be in attendance. Haverhill High Principal Glen Burns did attend the event.

The Deluca family attended the award presentation to meet the student who won the award, including her brother Ken and her sons Ryan and Jonathan.

"Our mom died last year after a long battle with metastatic breast cancer," said Jonathan Benedetti.

"She dedicated her whole life to helping the community. She was a social worker for the Department of Children and Families for 21 years. She was a supervisor in the Haverhill office for the last few years. We are so happy to be able to present this scholarship in her name today."

"My mom was a pistol and we were lucky to have her," Benedetti's son Ryan said.

"We miss her a lot, so we are trying to

SCHOLARSHIPS: PAGE 14

Dominican Brothers in Lawrence Indicted for Fentanyl Conspiracy

BOSTON – Two brothers from the Dominican Republic who lived in Lawrence were indicted yesterday in federal court in Boston on fentanyl distribution charges.

Guillermo Aybar-Guerrero, 28, and Luis Aybar-Guerrero, 24, were indicted on one count of conspiring to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute fentanyl and one count of possession with intent to distribute fentanyl. The defendants were previously charged in criminal complaints and arrested in June 2020.

According to charging documents, investigators conducted controlled purchases of fentanyl from Guillermo on June 10 and 17, 2020. On June 25, 2020, investigators set up a third controlled purchase, at which time Guillermo was arrested in possession of approximately 30 grams of suspected fentanyl. It is alleged that Guillermo retrieved these 30 grams of fentanyl from his brother, Luis. A search of Luis' residence resulted in the seizure of an additional 263 grams of fentanyl as well as a scale, baggies and other drug-distribution paraphernalia.

The charge of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl, and possession with intent to distribute of 40 grams or more of fentanyl carry a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 40 years in prison; at least four years of supervised release and a fine of $5 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Field Division made the announcement today. The case is being prosecuted by Lelling's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. ◊

It's a Two Way Street

Santiago Reyes Cruz, Jr.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

For the past few months the Country has continued to witness a nation that is in uproar. Instead of calming tensions and differences between neighborhoods, recent events seem to simply add on to our sadness and grief.

These are sincerely difficult times for every American citizen who is currently living here in 2020.

It seems that rebels combined with terrorist-like mobs are the ones winning the race; that this violence is One Way Traffic and only afflicting innocent citizens and business.

A prime example occurred this past Monday Night in Kenosha WI, a city on the Lake Michigan coastline between Chicago and Milwaukee. A police shooting caught on video sparked protests in Kenosha Wisconsin where demonstrators torched cars and set buildings ablaze demanding justice for the shooting of Jacob Blake.

Jacob Blake, a 29 year old man attempted to get into a small SUV with his three sons inside while officers aimed guns at him. Blake survived but the family's attorney said he is paralyzed from the waist down. The main cause for the shooting was the fact that Jacob reached into his SUV while police were trying to communicate and stop him from reaching into his vehicle.

Since he was unresponsive and aggressive while getting into his vehicle, police officers opened fire before Jacob could reveal the item he was reaching for. Police officers weren't going to gamble and allow the suspect to arm himself and possibly aim a gun at them, hence they made their move to shoot him.

After the shooting, the City of Kenosha WI left people with more questions than answers so in return Monday night, 8/24/2020, Kenosha WI citizens, along with other locals, nearly destroyed the city.

In response to this one-way traffic assault on property and innocent citizens, Kenosha Police cried out for help to local authorities to help control riots and businesses from being looted and burned to the ground.

This call for help created a second flow of traffic making it a two way street fight. Among the people who showed up to help Kenosha Police was a 17 year old male by the name of Kyle Rittenhouse.

While helping police, Kyle Rittenhouse is accused of killing two and injuring one with an AR-15 style rifle.

For many Americans, the actions of Kyle Rittenhouse seem to be the appropriate response when facing terrorist-like mobs.

The 17 year old is now facing court charges and only time will tell if his actions of killing two and injuring one while protecting businesses and citizens was patriotic or not.

Did Kyle Rittenhouse act correctly? What will the Courts and Jury say? While we await these answers I'll say this, The New England Region - specifically the Merrimack Valley has demonstrated outstanding leadership and character by not participating in similar acts of violence and protests where properties are set ablaze and people shot dead.

Good Job Merrimack Valley!

Keep up the peaceful protests. ◊

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CP4VNE is continually serving our Service Members, Veterans, and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date we have provided nearly **11,000** Food4Vets food supply kits in partnership with Massachusetts Military Support Foundation across New England including Middlesex, Essex, Rockingham, and Hillsborough counties.

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To learn more about our programs, workshops, and upcoming events visit us at clearpathne.org or by scanning the QR code below with your smartphone.

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Jake Nicolosi of Haverhill High School received the Michelle DeLuca Benedetti Memorial Scholarship, pictured (above left) with Chris Eldredge of The Valley Patriot BASH Committee

SCHOLARSHIPS: FROM 9

keep her legacy alive. This is a great way to do that. We are happy Jake is getting the scholarship and we are just happy that her legacy lives on."

State Representative Lenny Mirra also attended the ceremony and donated $100 to this scholarship.

This year's scholarship winner is Haverhill High School senior Jake Nicolosi, who is also captain of the wrestling team and now has the most wins of any Haverhill High School student in the history of the school and won the New England's.

Jake is attending Johnson and Wales University in the fall where he will be majoring in criminal justice.

The total (to date) for this scholarship is $2,135.

PATRICIA PERRY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Earlier this year Patricia Perry of Methuen passed away after a short illness. She is the mother of Methuen Mayor Neil Perry who established this annual scholarship in March with two, $1,000 donations to students who are graduating from Methuen High School.

"My mom was born in Methuen, raised in Methuen, and died in Methuen. She passed away earlier this year in March right at the beginning of the Covid situation," Methuen Mayor Neil Perry said at the ceremony.

"She worked for a number of businesses including working for the city of Methuen, she worked for a real estate company and also worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a while. She was very active in the community. She volunteered for the Padre Pio Society; she was active in St. Monica's Parrish. She was a firm believer in the goodness of people in general."

"She was always willing to give the shirt off her back to anyone who needed something, even when …. she wasn't the wealthiest woman. She raised three sons, one who died at 28 years-old. She was married to a Methuen Police Officer, my father, who retired as the Deputy Police Chief in Methuen. He then became the CCD director for St. Monica's Parish. My mom was a 1952 graduate of Searls Academy. She was all things Methuen and she loved her city."

KERRI HORAN

Kerri Horan is the first recipient of this scholarship. She played softball for Methuen High for three years and was also a cheerleader all four years. She will be attending Suffolk University in the fall.

She says she is considering playing softball for Suffolk but has not made up her mind yet. Kerri will be majoring in business in the fall.

Getting choked up, Kerri thanked Mayor Perry for starting the scholarship in memory of his mom.

ZOE TOOHEY

Zoe participated in indoor and outdoor track at Methuen High. She was on varsity and went to States every year. Zoe was a co-captain for cross country her senior year and also volunteered with the youth track/ cross country program. She is in the top 5% of her class, earning high honors all throughout high school. She will be attending UMASS-Lowell in the fall.

Coincidentally Mayor Perry also attended UMASS-Lowell. She will be majoring in Criminal Justice.

This scholarship total is $2,700 split among each student.

Donating to this scholarship are Janet McLennan of Century 21 McLennan and Company, Methuen City Councilor Joel Faretra, Linda Soucy from the Methuen-Arlington Neighborhood Association, Beverly Marotto, Methuen City Councilor DJ Beauregard and Methuen Mayor Neil Perry. The total for this scholarship is $2,700 to be split between each recipient.

WHITTIER TECH SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was established by Valley Patriot reader and advertiser Al Veilleux three years ago. This year's Whitter Tech Scholarship went to Salisbury resident Lauren Fitzgerald.

Lauren comes from a long line of graduates from Whittier. She is graduating from Whittier majoring in Dental Assisting.

"My end goal is to be an oral surgeon. So, I have about eight to ten years of school ahead of me."

She is attending Suffolk University for her undergraduate degree. She volunteered with Skills USA, The presidential service award, Sober presidential service award through her grandmother's assisted living facility.

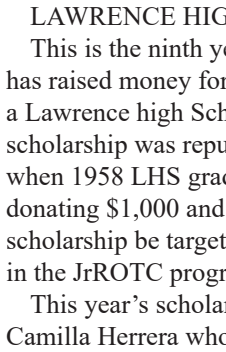
Lauren was also presented with a citation from State Senator Diana DiZoglio (D) Methuen, through her aid Callie who did the official presentation.

This scholarship total is $2,500

Donating to this scholarship are State Rep. Lenny Mirra, Al Veileaux, Mike Thibodeau, Steve Spaulding, Lisa Williams of AFC Urgent Care, Building Wreckers Union Local 1421 president Tom Troy, and Frank Quintana of Quintana Building Supplies.

GREATER LAWRENCE TECH

The Greater Lawrence Tech Scholarship was established by Valley Patriot BASH Committee member Jessica Finocchiaro six years ago. Jessica is a member of the Methuen City Council and a former member of the Greater Lawrence Tech School Board. Jessica also screens scholarship applicants for this scholarship each year and chose Ahlyia LeClerc to receive this year's award.



Ahlyia is a Methuen resident who had a 4.29 GPA and graduated sixth in her class of 372 students. She is enrolled in AP Physics and dual enrollment in English and History through Middlesex Community College she was a member of the honor society and was awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. She also donated her time to work with Merrimack Valley ASAP for substance abuse prevention.

Ahlyia will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. "I was originally going to be taking astronomy," Ahlyia said on the Paying Attention Podcast, "but I changed my major to environmental science in order to pursue an astro-biology career."

This year Valley Patriot readers donated $2,900 for this scholarship.

Donating to this scholarship are: Building Wreckers Union Local 1421 President Tom Troy, Laborer's Union Local 175 President Mike Gagliardi, Methuen Councilor Jessica Finocchiaro, Christine Prescott, Lisa Williams of AFC Urgent Care, Merrimack Valley ASAP, and Frank Quintana of Quintana Building Supplies.

LAWRENCE HIGH JrROTC

This is the ninth year The Valley Patriot has raised money for a scholarship for a Lawrence high School graduate. This scholarship was repurposed in 2018 when 1958 LHS graduate Eugene Smith donating $1,000 and asked that the scholarship be targeted towards a student in the JrROTC program

This year's scholarship recipient is Camilla Herrera who did not attend the scholarship ceremony.

This year's total for the LHS-JrROTC Scholarship is $2,490. Donors to this scholarship are Lawrence High Alumni Association, Ben Kitchen, Eugene Smith of Military Connections, Wendy Gardner, Atty. Paul Lambert, Jim Denuccio, and Paul Dunphy. A big thank you to the Valley Patriot BASH Committee for their efforts to organize our scholarship program. ◊

Andover Fire Rescue Receives $22,000 Grant for COVID-19 Protection and Response

ANDOVER — Chief Michael B. Mansfield is pleased to announce that Andover Fire Rescue has been awarded a $22,000 grant from the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program (CESFP). The grant will be used to purchase equipment to continually disinfect fire apparatus, ambulances and fire stations in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among Andover Fire Rescue personnel.

Chief Mansfield authored the successful application. Eligible municipalities were invited to solicit up to $50,000 in total funding to benefit their police and/or fire department needs.

"This grant from the State is especially helpful in funding the extra precautions the department has taken during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Chief Mansfield.

"With this equipment, we can better protect the health and safety of our department members and community."

The equipment is expected to arrive by early next year.

Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program (CESFP) The Baker-Polito Administration allocated more than $9.6 million in federal Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program (CESFP) grants awarded to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research (OGR) from the U.S. Department of Justice.

More than 100 local and state public safety agencies will receive this funding for additional resources to further aid in preventing, preparing for and/or responding to the Coronavirus.

The funding will assist agencies with outfitting staff with personal protective gear, purchasing deep cleaning sanitation equipment for correctional facilities and academies, utilizing video technology to conduct hearings remotely, and obtaining materials to reconfigure office space to enhance social distancing and protect essential workers. ◊

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Erosion of Societal Integrity

Kathleen Laplante
DRACUT COLUMNIST

NOTE: If you are in suicidal crisis, please call or text the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [1-800-273-8255] [Text HELP to 741741].**

We as a society are "two-faced." We work diligently to save the lives of human beings who want to end theirs. Then we turn around, and work diligently to intentionally end the lives of human beings in the wombs of the many women not wanting their pregnancy. The men may not want it either.

Insight into our fractured societal integrity can be gained by examining typical messages, direct and indirect, commonly conveyed by advocates for suicide prevention and crisis pregnancy resolution. Start with suicide prevention: "Life is precious. Don't kill yourself." "You can rebuild your future – hold on, one minute at a time if you need to. There are people who will help you." "Suicide is a permanent solution to your temporary problem." "Taking your own life does not stamp out your pain; that pain gets passed on to your spouse, children, parents, even your neighbors and co-workers. They will miss you and grieve your death."

Then examine direct and indirect messages conveyed for crisis pregnancy resolved via abortion: "Life is precious; at least yours is. The life of the human being in your womb is disposable." "You won't have a future if you give birth to the human being in your womb. No one will help you."

"Ending your unwanted pregnancy by killing the human being in your womb is a permanent solution to your problem. You will get rid of your pain and no one else will be affected."

An irresolvable dichotomy is starkly apparent. Abortion is inherently opposed to life-saving suicide prevention efforts. Actually, it is opposed to all efforts aimed at saving lives, e.g., doctors, nurses, EMTs, etc.

With opposing messages, we are renouncing personal responsibility for societal integrity. A scenario, like this fictional one, may play out in real life – maybe it already has: A suicide prevention advocate is "planting seeds" in her conversation with a suicidal woman. The advocate tells her that life is precious; please hang on. The woman, in deep pain with no hope, replies, "That's a lie. I had an abortion a year ago. No one spoke up about life being precious then. I killed my baby. Hundreds of thousands of babies are killed every year [U.S., 2017: ~862,320 (Guttmacher Institute) = 2,362/day]. So don't tell me life is precious."

Now examine direct and indirect messages conveyed for crisis pregnancy resolved by birth, or by birth-then-adoption: "Life is precious, both your life and the life of the human being in your womb." "You can rebuild your future – hold on, one minute at a time if you need to. There are people who will help you." "Ending your unwanted pregnancy by killing the human being in your womb is a permanent solution to your temporary problem." "Taking the life of the human being in your womb will not get rid of your pain. It gets passed on, consciously or unconsciously, to the father, your other children, even your neighbors and co-workers. It creates a hole in your family tree, just like suicide does."

Societal integrity is intact. The underlying messages are compatible. Some may say that crisis pregnancy resolution by birth or birth-then-adoption, is actually incompatible with suicide prevention efforts. They say it can ruin the lives of the parents who have unwanted pregnancies. That sentiment is real, and understood. However, the parents will still have lives. A dead human being will not. The parents will still have a chance to change their lives. Many of us have. A dead human being will have no chance. This evaluation is about life-or-death. Life trumps death.

Life-saving advocacy workers, who directly encourage, or indirectly allow abortion in our society, by saying it is a

SOCIETY: PAGE 18

Do Your Town's Politicians Support the Police?

Brian Genest
DRACUT COLUMNIST

The town of Dracut is in the news—for something positive. The Board of Selectmen stepped up, spoke out and backed the blue. The five members voted unanimously in favor of a resolution supporting the Dracut Police Department.

Acknowledging the protests against police around the country and recent legislation aimed at sweeping police reform, the Dracut board expressed its unwavering support for the men and women on the town's police force, saying selectmen stand in solidarity with the police department.

"The Dracut Board of Selectmen has witnessed our police officers perform to the highest level of professionalism throughout the last several months, during which Massachusetts has suffered through a pandemic, civil unrest and economic shutdown," the resolution said, also noting that town police officers have always been sensitive to issues of fairness and justice and have responded with care and compassion to all members of the community.

Acting Dracut Police Chief Stephen Chaput said the entire department is grateful for the show of support from the town.

"I'd like to thank the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and the Dracut community for their incredible show of support," Chaput said in a statement. "The proclamation issued by the board helps make a very difficult job a little bit easier and recognizes the efforts of the outstanding men and women of the Dracut Police Department during these trying times."

Trying times, indeed. To make matters worse, some of the other politicians "representing" Dracut are working against the police.

State Senator Barry Finegold is one of those politicians. With his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate, Finegold passed a bill full of controversial police "reforms" or, as I like to call them, "reprimands."

The bill will tie the hands of police, empower criminals, force good officers out of the profession, prevent good people from joining the ranks and make every man, woman and child in every community in our state less safe.

In the Democrat-controlled legislature, the bill was handled with the usual amount of transparency, accountability and integrity: ushered through without a public hearing in the middle of the night.

Congresswoman Lori Trahan is also for chaos instead of the cops. The progressive, anti-police Democrat is co-sponsor of a so-called "justice in policing act." The bill on Capitol Hill, just like the one on Beacon Hill, provides justice for protesters, rioters, looters and everyone except the police.

Supporting the police matters, now more than ever. For Republicans, the party of law and order, this is an opportunity to bring forward resolutions similar to the one passed in Dracut in every municipality across the state.

This is a chance for Republican Town Committees to work with local officials, state committee members and others all over Massachusetts to show our strong support for our police. In Andover, let's partner with Selectman Alex Vispoli on a pro-police resolution. In Framingham, State Committeewoman Janet Leombruno, who's also a member of the City Council, can put the issue on the agenda herself! In Haverhill, State Committeewoman Maura Ryan-Ciardiello and her clan of political relatives can bring a similar measure before the city council and the other town governments in her district.

All of us have an obligation to do our

POLICE: PAGE 18

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Lawrence Man Saves Drowning Dog in Woburn

In May, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, John Cassabria moved to Lawrence, MA from Connecticut and began delivering Amazon packages from the newly launched Wilmington station as an employee of Amazon Delivery Service Partner, Zoo Station.

On Thursday, August 6th, John was delivering packages in the Woburn neighborhood when he heard an alarming noise he wasn't familiar with.

John opened his van door to get closer to, and identify the sound, which led him to a fence of a residence. John's heart started racing as he noticed a dog's muzzle barely sticking up from the water of an in ground swimming pool.

In a moment of quick thinking and bias for action, John dove into the pool to rescue the dog.

It was then that John realized the dog was elderly and couldn't help himself and was exhausted from trying to stay afloat for an unknown amount of time. John was neck deep in the pool and was able to hoist the dog out and to safety.

The property owners happened to be vacationing on The Cape, so John sat with the dog for 1.5 hours until animal control arrived on site. Out of sheer coincidence, the animal control representative lived nearby and knew the homeowners and phoned them to let them know their dog had been rescued from nearly drowning in their pool. John spoke with homeowner Julie Caldwell on the phone and she thanked him profusely for saving her 14-year old husky, Luka.

Mrs. Caldwell later wrote a note of sincere gratitude to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (available upon request).

"Animals are my life and I can't imagine what I'd do if my dog was in Luka's situation," John said.

"I love working as an Amazon delivery driver and I am so thankful the universe placed me in a position to save Luka's life."

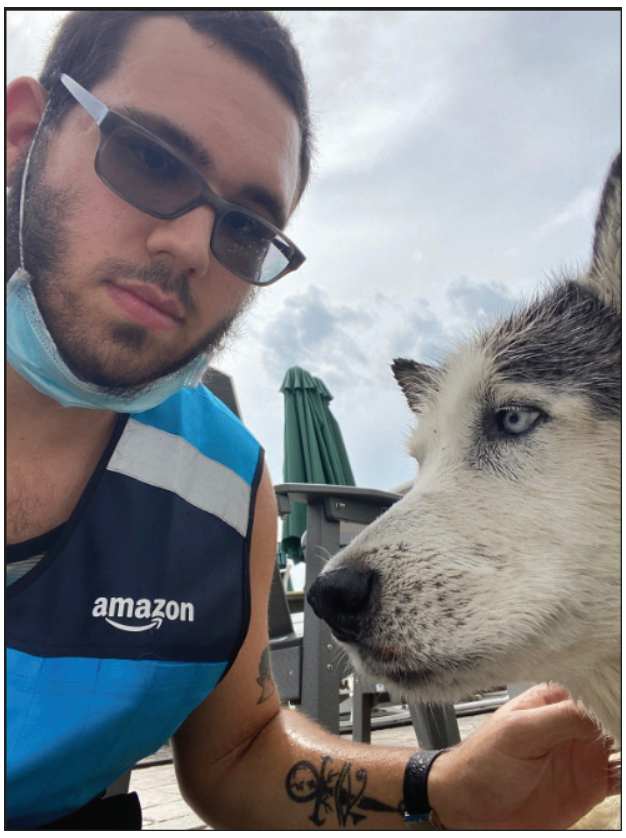
After the incident, the Caldwell's wrote the following letter to Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon;

"Hi Mr. Bezos,

I just wanted to make you aware of a situation that occurred yesterday at my home. My husband and I were not home and one of your drivers, John Cassabria, was making deliveries in my neighborhood. He heard my dog desperately yelping and barking in my backyard. He immediately went around to my back yard and saw my 14 year old husky drowning in my pool. Without hesitation he jumped into my pool and saved my beloved Luka! I can't thank him enough. Words cannot express how grateful we are to him. In fact I have tears in my eyes as I write this email. Luka is doing fine thanks to your wonderful and courageous employee.

My husband and I wanted to make you aware of what a truly wonderful young man John is.

Sincerely, Julie and Gary" ◊



Haverhill Man Charged with Conspiracy to Distribute Fentanyl

BOSTON – A Haverhill man was arrested and charged with conspiracy to distribute fentanyl.

Sergio Garcia, 36, was indicted on one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and one count of possession with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl. Following an initial appearance yesterday in federal court in Boston, Garcia was detained pending a detention hearing scheduled for Sept. 1, 2020.

According to the indictment, Garcia was in possession of 400 grams or more of fentanyl in Boston and Haverhill from April 20, 2020 to April 23, 2020.

The charge of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life in prison, at least five years of supervised release and a fine of up to $10 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew Lelling; Joseph W. Cronin, Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service's Boston Field Office; and Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New England Field Division made the announcement. The Haverhill Police Department provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip C. Cheng of Lelling's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting the case.

The operation was conducted by a multi-agency task force through the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), a partnership between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and money laundering organizations, and those primarily responsible for the nation's illegal drug supply. More information on the OCDETF program is available here: https://www.justice.gov/ocdetf/about-ocdetf.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. ◊

Methuen Receives A3 Stable Rating from Moody's Investor Services

City's Fiscal Status Improves with Significant Operating Surplus in 2020

Mayor Neil Perry and Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO) Maggie Duprey are pleased to announce that, according to Moody's Investor Service, The City of Methuen has been upgraded to an A3 stable rating. The city previously received a negative rating from Moody's.

Methuen's overall financial profile is improving after a period of fiscal challenges. Under the leadership of Mayor Perry and CAFO Duprey, in collaboration with the Methuen City Council, Methuen's financial position has improved with a significant operating surplus achieved in 2020. In addition, long term liabilities and fixed costs are now rated as manageable.

"We are extremely pleased by the latest ratings from Moody," says Mayor Perry. "The improvement shows that changes implemented by our department heads and employees, along with City Council oversight, have resulted in an A3 Stable rating. I am confident that our fiscal prudence will result in further improvements moving forward."

The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in reduced state revenue and other fiscal challenges. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is currently experiencing significant declines and delays in income tax and sales tax revenue.

Still, Methuen has been lauded for its sizeable, growing tax base outside of Boston, healthy resident wealth and incomes, and manageable long-term liabilities and fixed costs. The stable outlook reflects the city's return to balanced operations, reserve growth and projected growth and improved financial management. ◊

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Fixing Veterans' Graves

Don Jarvis
VEERANT COLUMNIST

Haverhill, Massachusetts, is considered the final resting place for approximately 8,000 veterans. This is believed to go as far back as the American Revolutionary War, and as current as of the Global War on Terrorism. Some of these veterans can be easier to locate than others. Some veterans may be marked with a grave marker but are unable to be read.

Sitting in the back, upon a hill, at the Hilldale Cemetery is a section commonly referred to as Veterans Hill. This section is one of the most straightforward areas to locate due to the white flagpole, proudly flying the American Flag. The flagpole is in the middle of the "Civil War Memorial," which, besides the flagpole, and honors over 300 Civil War veterans interred at the Hilldale Cemetery. Most of these grave markers have sunken over time, becoming extremely difficult to read. This memorial has also become the center point for the annual Wreaths Across America ceremony that takes place every December. Wreaths Across America is a nationwide event that takes place at the same time, same day, and thousands of volunteers place a wreath on the graves of our veterans.

With the Civil War Memorial in its current condition, we felt this would be an excellent opportunity to start a project in Haverhill. We plan to restore the dignity and honor that our veterans have earned. Spearheading a similar project in Newbury, and successfully caring for hundreds of veterans' graves in the last five years. I knew that this could easily be cleaned up and looking good by this year when the Wreaths Across America ceremony happens.

With over 100 gallons of water, a plastic bin filled with soft bristle brushes, and a couple of bottles of D/2 Biological Solution. The Rotary Club of Haverhill and members of VFW Lorraine Post 29 and AMVets 147 we were able to start this project on Saturday, August 22, and cleaned and reset seven grave markers. Following all methods and protocols that Arlington National Cemetery uses, we will bring the same honor and dignity to our Veterans. A document published by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training – National Park Service in 2011 called "Best Practice Recommendations for Cleaning Government Issued Headstones." Outlined in the document are several recommendations that cleaning should be with the least-abrasive method possible. This document recommends the best cleaner being D/2 Biological Solution, which was tested in a study conducted under a President Executive Order 13287, Preserve America FY 2011. "It is extremely important that people know the proper way to care for the graves of our veterans," states Donald Jarvis. Adding "what could start as someone wanting to do something good could end up being something that could cause permanent damage. So, we must do everything as safely as possible not just for us, but also for the veteran and their family." ◊

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

payments of $49. He paid the house off in five years. He and his wife are members of Pelham's First Congregationalist Church since 1950. He served as Trustee, Deacon, Sexton, and is now a Trustee Emeritus.

He worked at Greg and Sons, owned by the family of New Hampshire Governor Hugh Greg. After the company moved to Canada, Joseph went to work for Sommerville Lumber, finishing his career in Pelham, NH as their assistant store manager. He enjoyed playing golf with friends, coworkers, and customers. Once he scored a hole in one, at Pine Valley GC on hole number 9 in the Lion's Club Golf Tournament. A Scoutmaster in Pelham, NH for five years, his favorite merit badge to work on with the Scouts was Hiking. He loved the 20-mile hikes! Joseph is very proud to be a charter member of the Pelham American Legion Post 100 and he participated in an Honor Flight on November 5th, 2019.

Now ninety-three years old, he ran for 35+ years, did many a half marathon, and still fishes for Strippers off Plum Island. He cut our first interview off, to go cut his lawn! He cut our second interview short, because he was cutting down trees on his 10 acres with a chain saw. How many of us will be able to cut our own lawn or take down a tree with a chain saw, when we are ninety-three?

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go to the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org, and join the American Legion, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations. John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 23 years. If you know a World War II veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com. ◊

POLICE: FROM PAGE 16

part. This is no time for any of us to be quiet. It's time to take note of who defends our police and who wants to defund them. It's time for the silent majority to send a loud and clear message: we back the blue and expect our town politicians to, too.

— Brian Genest is chairman of the Dracut Republican Town Committee and a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex and Middlesex district of Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. ◊

SOCIETY: FROM PAGE 16

woman's choice, are denying the "elephant in the room." If we want to stop living this lie, and take personal responsibility for societal integrity, we must re-examine and re-align our positions to be consistent about the value and dignity of all human life. (Image source – istockphoto.com)

Kathleen Laplante is author of both a book and Facebook page entitled, "Unraveling My Father's Suicide." She is also creator of the Facebook page, "Let There Be Life." She is not a mental health professional. ◊

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TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

‘Yellowstone’ Delivers A Terrific Season, Dominates Cable Ratings

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

The Paramount Network’s flagship show, ‘Yellowstone,’ a modern day western set in Montana, just finished its strong third season with a big cliffhanger, leaving fans waiting for next season.

The show, starring and executive produced by Kevin Costner, is a big-time performer for the network and the season 3 finale delivered the best ratings in the networks short history. More than 5.2 million viewers tuned in, making the episode not only the most viewed episode in Paramount’s history, but also the most viewed episode on all of cable TV for this season.

The show centers on the Dutton family, led by patriarch John Dutton (Costner), owners of the largest cattle ranch in the US. John’s kids don’t always see eye to eye with their father. Beth is a tough, ambitious corporate executive; Jamie is a lawyer who wants daddy’s approval; and Kayce is an Army veteran who married Monica, an American Indian, and now lives on the ranch with their son, Tate.

‘Yellowstone,’ like many good westerns, combines gritty action with the dreamy landscapes of America’s lush frontiers. All of the drama occurs in one of the most beautiful backdrops seen on television. This series is a visual feast, with stunning mountains, lovely vistas and spectacular camera work.

It also comes with a great cast. Costner is no stranger to westerns, and he is very comfortable in his role, delivering a terrific understated performance as the head of the Dutton clan. Luke Grimes as Kayce, and Wes Bentley as Jaime are serviceable in their roles. Cole Hauser as Rip does a great job portraying the mysterious ranch hand who clearly has a history with Beth and who John thinks of as a son. But the scene stealer in ‘Yellowstone’ is Kelly Reilly as Beth. Beth is a ferocious business woman, handling the corporate side of the business, and uses her sexuality and family name like weapons. Reilly is a powerhouse in the role.

Much of what makes ‘Yellowstone’ worth watching is what sets it apart from other TV dramas. It’s the only western series currently on the air, unless you count HBO’s sci-fi series ‘Westworld’ as one. Beyond the simmering father-child tensions, there’s a vast world of stories within ‘Yellowstone’ that you’ll see develop as the series progresses. The writing on the series is top notch too, the dialogue is razor sharp and the characters are compelling.

‘Yellowstone’ was created and written by Taylor Sheridan. Before Sheridan skyrocketed to A-list feature screenwriter status with his Oscar nominated ‘Hell or High Water,’ and ‘Wind River’ (which he also directed), Sheridan was best known for playing Deputy Chief of Police David Hale on ‘Sons of Anarchy.’

Filming is already underway on Season 4, and the season is expected to premiere sometime in June.

‘Yellowstone’ airs Sunday nights on The Paramount Network and all 3 seasons are available On Demand and to stream on the Peacock network. If you’re looking for something to binge on, check it out.

If you have any questions about TV you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◊

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Liberty

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

God's richest blessings on you and your families in the name of Jesus Christ, especially, during these uncertain and trying times we are living in! I bet it is safe to say that nobody's year of 2020 is going the way they originally planned. But make no mistake, none of this has caught God by surprise! No virus, no economic downturn and not even all the racial unrest that continues to plague our land has made God Almighty, The Creator of the Heavens and Earth, in anyway shocked!

Why is that you may ask? The reason is that He watched mankind nail His Son Jesus to a wooden cross in order for the world to be saved from their sin. If He could withstand that without deciding to stop it all and wipe out mankind, but instead show forth the greatest demonstration of LOVE, what we are going through just can't be compared! The Bible says in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." NKJV.

Last month I wrote about the Bible's perspective on Justice and Equity and Fairness that God's Justice and Equity are always trustworthy while mankind's justice and equity many times falls short and cannot be relied on. This month I would like to take a look at what the Bible says about Liberty.

According to God's Word, the Bible, Liberty means freedom, unrestrained. We read the following in 2 Corinthians 3:17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." NKJV. Where, meaning location, location, and location, where God's Spirit is there is Freedom unrestrained! God's Spirit also known as The Holy Spirit, marks us as The Children of God. This is what is meant by being born-again of God's Spirit. This is explained in Romans 8:16-17, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." NKJV. As children of God filled with the Holy Spirit, we have been giving by The Holy Spirit Liberty, freedom unrestrained. And not only us but also God's creation will someday receive this Liberty as we read in Romans 8:21, "because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." NKJV. God's creation will be free from corruption just like those of us who are born-again!

As God's children, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ we can take our stand in this Liberty as it says in, Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." NKJV. The yoke of bondage is the law! We have been set free from the law, the 10 Commandments! Another way of saying this is that we have been made free from the do good get good, do bad get bad system of how to be made righteous before God. This doesn't mean we get to do whatever we want to, no not at all! We get to LOVE and SERVE one another with our Liberty! We read this in Galatians 5:13, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." NKJV. God's Liberty gives us the freedom to love and serve one another like Jesus Christ did for us!

What Christians need to understand is that our liberty comes from God and not our government! Yes, I know the preamble to our Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all** men are **created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, **Liberty** and the pursuit of Happiness." According to this document, LIFE, LIBERTY, and the PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS are unalienable Rights from the Creator meaning rights that can't be given away or taken way! But as much as we appreciate these words, they are still man's words. Like I said last month, how has this been working out for everyone? As long as mankind keeps looking to government for their freedoms and happiness, they will be continually unhappy! Only God can make you happy and even better than happiness, God can fill you with His Joy which is a fruit of The Spirit which far supersedes mankind's Happiness.

The Bible also says this about Justice in Proverbs 28:5, "Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the LORD understand all." NKJV. Here is this same verse from the Passion translation, "Justice never makes sense to men devoted to darkness, but those tenderly devoted to the Lord can understand justice perfectly." TPT.

I love how God's word "cuts to the chase"! God's people can understand Justice and how it works when applied correctly while those who have constantly rejected Him will always have problems and issues with the justice that man attempts to legislate!

I will end this column with one more verse about liberty, James 1:25, "But he who looks into the **perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." NKJV. Did you get this? God says if we continue in His LIBERTY, [freedom unrestrained], we will be blessed in what we do!

So, after everything that I have put forward last month and in this month's article, the only solution that makes any kind of sense when it comes to Justice, Equity, (fairness), is to look to God and stand fast in this Liberty where Christ has set us free and SERVE one another in LOVE!

Love to all of you!

Nun Rocks RNC

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A Catholic nun stole the show at the Republican National Convention (RNC) last month. The Devil lost a huge battle in his efforts to stifle the truth about life.

To truth-lovers, the words of Sr. Deirdre Byrne were music to their ears Wednesday. For those hiding from the truth, it was like nails on a chalkboard.

"I must confess," Byrne started out, "that I recently prayed while in chapel, begging God to allow me to be a voice, an instrument for human life. And now here I am, speaking at the Republican National Convention. I guess you'd better be careful what you pray for."

Among all the dignitaries speaking at the RNC this year, Byrne may possess the most interesting, if not unique, resume of all. Before becoming a religious sister, she served for 29 years as a medical doctor and surgeon. She is also a retired colonel of the U.S. Army, where she served seven years as a full-time officer.

But that's not all. Byrne was serving as a missionary while completing a second residency when she met Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

"My journey to religious life was not a traditional route, if there is such a thing," Byrne informed the audience.

She practiced medical surgery among the poor, from Afghanistan to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. After attending the "Salute to America" at the Lincoln Memorial July 4, where the president honored the service of those who make America better, Byrne told the National Catholic Register, "I am a general surgeon. I do free surgery for the poor and refugees."

Articulating beautifully and powerfully Wednesday night, Byrne shared her first-hand experience with the world's most vulnerable:

I can speak about my experience working for those fleeing war-torn and impoverished countries all around the world. Those refugees all share a common experience. They have all been marginalized, viewed as insignificant, powerless and voiceless. And while we tend to think of the marginalized as living beyond our borders, the truth is the largest marginalized group in the world can be found here in the United States. They are the unborn.

That last sentence may have knocked more than a few Americans off their comfortable recliners. When people are hiding from truth, i.e. hiding from God as did Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:8, it can be a little jolting.

Byrne entered formation with the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in 2002 and professed her first vows in 2004. Speaking of the infancy narratives in the Gospel of Luke — the realities found in the second and third joyful mysteries of the Rosary — Byrne shared with her national audience important insight about being poor.

"As Christians," she said, "we first met Jesus as a stirring embryo in the womb of an unwed mother and saw him born nine months later in the poverty of the cave."

Byrne is board certified in family medicine and general surgery. She has earned the title of fellow in the American College of Surgeons. Besides having impressive credentials, she knows there is nothing more important than to follow Christ by defending the vulnerable — despite the consequences:

It is no coincidence that Jesus stood up for what was just and was ultimately crucified because what He said was not politically correct or fashionable. As followers of Christ, we are called to stand up for life against the politically correct or fashionable of today. We must fight against a legislative agenda that supports and even celebrates destroying life in the womb.

What a difference from Sr. Simone Campbell, who spoke at the Democrat convention. Campbell neither looked like nor sounded like a Catholic religious sister. While Byrne laid down unequivocally our moral obligation to the innocent unborn in the midst of today's ongoing abortion slaughter, Campbell told us that the moral question surrounding legal abortion was above her pay grade.

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Top Notch Scholars Historic 2020 Scholarship Award Ceremony

Joanna DePena, Executive Director of Top Notch Scholars in Lawrence, a unique educational enhancement program for local high school students, held their 2020 Senior Awards Celebration on Thursday, August 20th, at 4:00 at Tenney Castle in Methuen. DePena noted thirteen scholarships has been awarded, five of which are full 4 year scholarships. "The scholarships are the result of a youth-led fundraising effort that brought in over $7,000. The students enlisted the support of three corporate sponsors who partnered to support the scholarship fund. We sincerely thank Schneider Electric, Bell Tower Management and Planet Aid for their partnerships, and appreciate the donation of laptops by Microsoft, and food for our event from Chick-Fil-A of Methuen."

The mission of Top Notch Scholars is to provide life skills and leadership opportunities to poor and low-income youth in Lawrence and surrounding communities. The cornerstone of Top Notch Scholars is a 13 week Leadership Academy conducted after school hours, focused on building self-esteem and confidence, healthy relationships, college awareness and readiness, public speaking and financial literacy and paving the path towards every students identified passion and purpose in life that will lead to happiness and fulfillment. DePena said, "We teach our students how to communicate, set and achieve goals, build credentials and integrity, resolve conflict and most importantly, to listen. We acknowledge the

scope of this challenge in today's economic and political climate. But we know this is a formula that works. Our 100% high school graduation and college acceptance rate proves it. We like to call this place a 'dream machine'."

Top Notch Awarded 13 scholarships, Microsoft laptops and a vehicle to hard working youth in the program and looks forward to continue this tradition.

Jenny Alvarez, the Business Development Director stated, "This is huge, just last year we were only able to award 1 scholarship at $500 - to be able to award 13 scholarships is an absolute blessing and we cannot wait to continue to grow our impact in the community and serve more students." ◊

NUN: FROM PAGE 20

The co1mparison is emblematic of the deep moral and philosophical difference between the political parties today: One party seeks anti-Catholic Catholics to obscure the truth while the other chooses real Catholics to convey the message. It is also worth noting that talking heads in the Luciferian fake news media hardly mentioned Byrne's talk. It's as if ignoring the truth will make it go away.

Byrne dropped yet another truth bomb by mixing her Catholic faith with her knowledge of medical science.

"We must ask ourselves what we are saying when we go into a womb and snuff out an innocent, powerless, voiceless life. As a physician, I can say without hesitation: Life begins at conception," said the nun.

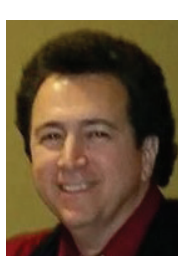
Knowing the volatile reaction she would get, Byrne assured people she speaks only out of love. Perhaps a few priests and bishops should take note: "While what I have to say may be difficult for some to hear, I am saying it because I am not just pro-life, I am pro-eternal life. I want all of us to end up in Heaven together someday."

Then came her political message. Voting is a moral act, and Byrne wants everyone to have a properly formed conscience:

Donald Trump is the most pro-life president this nation has ever had, defending life at all stages. His belief in the sanctity of life transcends politics. President Trump will stand up against Biden-Harris, who are the most anti-life presidential ticket ever, even supporting the horrors of late-term abortion and infanticide.

Sr. Byrne concluded her glorious talk by imploring us to take up our spiritual weapons for the election and pray that God blesses our nation.

"Because of his courage and conviction, President Trump has earned the support of America's pro-life community," the sister lauded. "You'll find us here with our weapon of choice, the Rosary. Thank you, Mr. President, we are all praying for you."



Originally published in Church Militant. Paul is the host of Beneath the Surface video and radio podcasts, teaches college philosophy & theology, is a staff writer/producer for Church Militant, as well as a singer-songwriter-musician. See his YouTube page or his personal website at Paulmurano.com. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com ◊

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